

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of claim 20. Moreover, Applicants thank the Examiner for noting claims 6, 9, 11, 17-19, 27 and 32 contain allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form. The Examiner has rejected the remaining claims. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) for failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Applicants respectively traverse. Dielectric grease is not positively claimed in any of the claims. Claims 6, 17, 20, and 27 only require a “reservoir formed within a boundary of said raised sealing ridge and adapted to contain a quantity of dielectric grease.” The reservoir is clearly depicted in FIG. 1 therefore this feature of the invention specified in the claims is shown in the drawings. The drawings also show an “asymmetrical” polarizing shape as discussed *infra* in Applicants’ response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Moreover, FIG. 6 depicts the overmolded connector contained within the shroud and the shroud interengaging with the hard shell connector. Thus, Applicants believe that the drawings show every feature of the invention specified in the claims.

Claims 8, 9, 28 and 29 stand rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. It is believed the Examiner intended to reject claim 7 instead of claim 9. This rejection was based on the Examiner’s assertion that it was unclear how the connector and shroud bodies have an asymmetrical polarizing shape. Claim 8, for example, claims “said substantially rigid connector body has the asymmetrical

AMENDMENT TO OFFICE ACTION

Page 15 of 19

polarizing shape.” Preferred embodiment examples of the asymmetrical polarizing shapes are referred to in the specification on the top of page 15 of the specification. The hardshell shroud 40 and the hardshell connector 70 have a body cross-section that is D-shaped to ensure that they can only engage in one direction. The shape around a horizontal center plane passing through the cross section is clearly asymmetrical. One half has corners at generally right angles and the other half has very rounded corners. Thus, FIGs 3, 4, 5, and 6 clearly depict the “asymmetrical polarizing shape” of hardshell shroud 40 and hardshell connector 70 referred to in claims 7, 8, 28 and 29.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 12, 21, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,059,594 to Davis et al. (the “Davis” reference). Applicants respectfully traverse. The language of independent claims 1, 12 and 21 specifically require an “overmolded body at least partially encasing said at least one terminal and said at least one wire.” The Davis reference teaches, on column 4, lines 34-36 that the wire is inserted through a passage in seal 94 after it is overmolded over the contact 70. Davis does not teach overmolding directly over the wire, but instead teaches away from this by specifying that the wire is inserted after the overmolding process is complete. Thus, the device as disclosed in the Davis reference does not anticipate Applicants’ invention.

Dependent claims 7, 8, and 10 depend from claim 1 and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 1. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 7, 8, and 10 are allowable over the references of record for at least the same reasons set forth in both respects to independent claim 1.

The Examiner also rejected claims 21, 22, 30, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being

AMENDMENT TO OFFICE ACTION

Page 16 of 19

anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,890,922 to Butcher (the “Butcher” reference). Applicants respectfully traverse. Independent claim 21 as amended requires “a reservoir formed within a boundary of said raised sealing ridge and adapted to contain a quantity of dielectric grease.” The Butcher reference does not disclose such an adapted reservoir. Thus, the Butcher reference cannot anticipate claim 21 as amended. Dependent claims 30 and 31 depend from claim 21, and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 21. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 30 and 31 are allowable over the references for at least the same reasons set forth above in respect to independent claim 21.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28 and 29 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,993,803 to Suverison et al. (the “Suverison” reference) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,315,609 to Chung (the “Chung” reference). Applicants respectfully traverse.

The Suverison reference teaches away from the invention as claimed by Applicants. Claims 1, 12, and 21 specifically claim “an overmolded body.” The Suverison reference does not disclose an overmolded body as conceded by the Examiner. Moreover, it would not be obvious to modify the housing member 24 as disclosed in the Suverison reference to be overmolded. The Suverison reference discloses a housing member 24 that has flexible lock arms 58. These flexible lock arms firmly secure the terminals 56 to the terminal cavity 30 upon insertion. Thus, the insertion of the terminals 56 into the terminal cavity 30 causes the flexible lock arms 58 to flex and firmly grasp the terminals 56.

Using a overmolding process with such a configuration would utterly defeat the function of the flexible lock arms 58 disclosed in the Suverison reference. The flexible lock

AMENDMENT TO OFFICE ACTION

Page 17 of 19

arms 58 only function through the insertion of terminal 56 into the housing member 24. If molded body 24 was just overmolded over the top of terminal 56, there would be no flexing of flexible arms 58. Flexible arms 58 therefore would no longer be necessary to allow a secured grip along terminal 56. Moreover, attempting to overmold around cover spring 54 would also defeat the cover spring's 54 purpose. The fiber optic cable 18 is intended to be inserted into the housing member 24 to maintain compression of spring 54. Overmolding cover spring 54 would render the compression of the spring impossible. Therefore, the Suverison reference teaches away from using an overmolding process on its housing member 24.

In addition, modifying the Suverison reference with the Chung reference is not suggested. The Examiner concedes that the molded connector is not disclosed as overmolded in the Suverison reference. Applicants' claims require "overmolded" parts. The Chung reference does not disclose an overmolded process. Overmolding is when molten plastic is injected into a mold over a pre-existing item. The Chung reference discloses placing three snap-fit pieces over the terminal and wire connection after the two have been permanently conjoined. Snapping together parts around a pre-existing item is not "overmolding" as commonly known to one skilled in the art. See U.S. Patent No. 6,551,540 to Porter, column 2, lines 40-42. Combining the snap-fit pieces as disclosed in the Chung reference to the housing member disclosed in the Suverison reference does not render Applicant's invention obvious because Applicants' claims require "overmolded" parts. Therefore, the Applicants' invention is not obvious in light of the Suverison and Chung references.

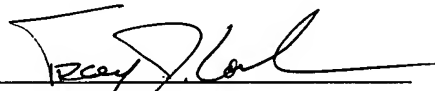
Dependent claims 2-5, 7-8, 13-16, and 23-26, 28 and 29 all depend from independent

claims 1, 12, and 21 and therefore include all of the limitations of claims 1, 12 and 21. It is therefore respectively submitted that the dependent claims are allowable over the references of record for at least the same reasons as set forth above in respect to independent claims 1, 12 and 21.

Accordingly, claims 1-5, 7-10, 12-16, 21, 23-26 and 28-31 are in condition for allowance and are respectively requested to pass issue. Should it facilitate allowance of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

No additional fees are believed to be necessary, however, should any fees be deemed required, the Commissioner is authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 23-3030, but is not to include payment of issue fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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AMENDMENT TO OFFICE ACTION

Page 19 of 19